

INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
HEAD OF PLANNING	PLANNING COMMITTEE	8 JUNE 2022	9
PLANNING ADVISORY SERVICE - SCOPING			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

The purpose of the report is to provide the committee with information about a forthcoming Planning Advisory Service (PAS) review later in the year. The report outlines the process for the review and includes the proposed scope of the review at Fylde. The committee is invited to comment on the proposed scope of the PAS review.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Relevant officers responsible for delivery of the Corporate Plan action / outcome.

LINK TO INFORMATION

[The Planning Advisory Service](#)

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

This information is provided to inform the committee about the forthcoming PAS review and the proposed scope of the work drafted by the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Leader, Chief Planning Officer and Chief Executive with advice from the Local Government Association (LGA) who will administer the review.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Information

Officers are in discussion with the LGA to arrange a Planning Advisory Service review of the planning service at Fylde. The review is considered beneficial to the service because it offers an independent critical friend assessment of the service. Because the planning service deals with some of the most important strategic matters that shape the built environment and the local community, every opportunity to review and improve performance is explored. With significant post pandemic changes in working arrangements, workplace behaviour and attitudes in society a PAS review will have added benefit to the planning service and the council.

A peer challenge offers an in-depth look at the service offering a critical friend view of weaknesses and opportunities. Accordingly, it has been agreed to invite PAS to carry out a review in the Autumn, the actual onsite dates have yet to be agreed.

Planning is a vital service with the local plan delivering the longer-term spatial aims for the area, to the planning committee as a very public "shop window" of decision making of the council, and the challenge of delivering homes and businesses now and in the future, making sure the service is functioning at its best is always helpful.

A planning peer challenge offers an in-depth look at the service that can be focused on specific elements of the service or across the whole service, used as a baseline for the leadership and for places, thinking about the long-term health of the service or facing up to a new challenge.

Setting the Scope

The following themes are some examples of areas reviewed by PAS however, a review is bespoke, and PAS will shape the scope to fit local circumstances, it is essential that PAS are aware of what the council wants to achieve through the review.

- How well is the planning service supporting local priority outcomes?
- Is there a clear and locally distinctive planning vision for the area together with a strategy that sets out how the council will address planning needs for sustainable communities, housing, and the local economy?
- How will the council enable citizens and communities to shape localities in a way that meets their needs and aspirations?
- Does the council provide a good service to users?
- How will the council work with other councils, agencies, and communities to coordinate where necessary and work productively?

How a PAS Review Works

The scope is tailored to meet the specific needs of the service and the council. The onsite phase of the review takes place over three days and consist of the following stages:

- preparation of a position statement and timetable
- onsite work: principally interviews and discussion groups
- feedback on key findings and practical suggestions for accelerating improvement
- action planning session
- free follow up consultancy support.

The Review Team

PAS take a flexible approach to ensure that they bring together the right team for the review at Fylde. The team will usually include the following:

- team leader – senior planning manager (head of service or director)
- member peer(s) – senior councillor with planning experience
- officer peer(s) – senior planning officer
- challenge manager – LGA manager

The Proposed Scope for the Fylde Review

Whilst the Fylde PAS review will primarily focus on the Development Management service, it will also need to consider the council's approach to planning policy. It is proposed that the PAS be asked to focus on the following areas:

- Does the council have up to date planning policies in place that support and deliver the vision and priorities of the council and the local community?
- Does the council engage effectively with neighbouring planning authorities to resolve strategic cross boundary and sub-regional issues
- Engagement & Communication – how the service engages, communicates, and interacts with statutory consultees (town and parish councils, LCC, professional advisors, etc.) and the public throughout the application / planning process
- Leadership, Management & Administration – examine the operational practices and procedures in place, the reporting style and process 'flow'

- Decision Making – the process and ‘flow’ in place for decisions, the scheme of delegation, opportunities for community engagement in the planning process, any ‘bottle necks’, reasons for delays and performance against statutory determination times
- Enforcement – an examination of the policy / approach to enforcement, the appropriateness of action and no action and identifying any opportunities to learn from best practice. The PAS team will be asked to consider and advise on long standing enforcement issues
- Training and Support – how the council provides training and support to stakeholders on planning i.e. parishes, elected members etc. and the training and support available to secure continuous improvement for the planning officers